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## Idaho Transportation Department

### Today's News Briefs

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(Massachusetts) Melanies Law put to test as man faces OUI charges

BOSTON - Joshua Colon never met Melanie Powell.

He was an aspiring rap star from Lawrence. She was a teenager from Marshfield. All they really had in common is how they died at the hands of alleged repeat drunken drivers.

Now Colons family is pinning its hopes for justice on the package of tough new drunken-driving penalties named after Melanie.

John F. Comeau III, 21, of Methuen, stood out of view behind a courtroom door as he was arraigned yesterday on a charge of OUI, second offense.

Police say he was drunk when he ran down Colon, 23, and Juan Martinez, 19, of Lawrence, early Sunday morning in Methuen. Martinez was in critical condition last night.

I am glad that law has passed. It just passed Friday, and hell be the first person to face that, said Colons brother Jason.

Officials wouldnt discuss if Comeau will be charged with Colons death under the new manslaughter-by-motor-vehicle crime created by Melanies Law.

If he is charged with that and subsequently convicted, its a mandatory five-year prison sentence and a lifetime loss of license, said Erin Deveney, Registry of Motor Vehicles chief counsel.

Melanie Powells grandfather, Ron Bersani said his family fought hard to restore the minimum five-year sentence.

I hope it does bring justice for this family, Bersani said.

Some penalties under Melanies Law already have kicked in for Comeau. Because he refused to take a breath test, a conviction for OUI, second offense, carries a three-year loss of license, instead of one year under the previous law.